

PUBLIC COMMENT REVIEW: COUNCIL-INITIATED URBAN TREE CANOPY – NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ELEMENT SECTION

<p>Proposed Draft Policy: Proposed new text and proposed (removed text)</p>	<p>Reason for Proposed Change</p>
<p>Goal 9 <u>Provide healthy urban forests to support ecosystem services, public health, economic vitality, increased environmental stability and resiliency, and a better quality of life in urban unincorporated areas.</u></p>	<p>The newly proposed goal is consistent with state requirements as well as the countywide planning policies (CPPs), and the multicounty planning policies (MPPs) presented in the Puget Sound Regional Council’s (PSRC) Vision 2050.</p> <p>This proposed goal and newly proposed policies within this table were referred to the Department of Planning and Development Services (PDS) and Planning Commission for consideration and recommendation during the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update to be included in the Natural Environment Chapter on March 23, 2022. The policies in this table have been amended from Ordinance No. 22-096 to reflect input from Snohomish County staff which include considerations for implementing actions and supporting policies in corresponding Elements. This goal and policies below are consistent with chapter 76.15 RCW, as well as MPPs, and CPPs as listed below.</p> <p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management In 2021, Washington State passed the Urban and Community Forestry Act, that modernized and supports the Evergreen Communities Act in chapter 76.15 RCW and its related programs. The Evergreen Communities Act established the need for tools including canopy assessment and regional tree canopy analysis and targeted technical assistance to support cities and counties seeking to deliver impactful urban forestry programs. The Urban and Community Forestry Act adds capacity to the Evergreen Communities Act by utilizing information and analysis around environmental health disparities and salmon recovery plans and increasing capacity for the delivery of an urban forestry program in order to strengthen and enhance its impact and to expand participation to include federally recognized tribes and other community-based organizations.</p> <p>MPP-En-9: Enhance urban tree canopy to support community resilience, mitigate urban heat, manage stormwater, conserve energy, improve mental and physical health, and strengthen economic prosperity.</p> <p>MPP-En-13: Preserve and restore native vegetation and tree canopy, especially where it protects habitat and contributes to overall ecological function.</p> <p>MPP-CC-4: Protect and restore natural resources that sequester and store carbon such as forests, farmland, wetlands, estuaries, and urban tree canopy.</p>
<p>Objective 9. A <u>Develop an urban forest management program that identifies, protects, and restores forests and plants that have significant environmental, habitat, and aesthetic value in unincorporated urban areas.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management</p> <p>MPP-En-9, MPP-En-13, MPP-CC-4</p>

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<p>Policy 9.A.1 <u>The county shall model the urban forest management program on Evergreen Communities Act requirements, seek adequate funding for the program, and takes steps necessary for recognition for unincorporated urban areas as an Evergreen Community under the Evergreen Communities Act (Chapter 76.15 RCW).</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9</p>
<p>Policy 9.A.2 <u>The county shall prepare an urban forest management plan that meets requirements in chapter 76.15 RCW and establishes an area-wide minimum tree canopy goal for urban unincorporated areas of at least 30%.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9 This policy proposes using the goal of 30% in order to maintain the goal as presented in Ordinance No. 14-073. The analysis contributed to Ordinance No. 14-073 determined that the county has 30% urban unincorporated tree canopy coverage, and keeping this percentage provides a historical basis for continued assessment.</p>
<p>Policy 9.A.3 <u>The county’s urban forest management program should prioritize areas where tree canopy and understory vegetation would not otherwise have protection under critical areas, shoreline or drainage regulations and may include groves of trees and understory, significant individual trees or tree stands, street trees and community trees, forested hillsides, and areas within parks or urban development set aside for protection or restoration of native vegetation.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9, MPP-En-13, MPP-CC-4</p>
<p>Policy 9.A.4 <u>The county’s urban forest management program shall address requirements under the Growth Management Act to accommodate population, housing, and employment growth within unincorporated Urban Growth Areas while also preserving the urban forest canopy.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management GMA Goals – RCW 36.70A.020</p>
<p>Policy 9.A.5 <u>The county shall periodically perform a tree canopy assessment and inventory to identify areas for protection and enhancement and report this information to the County Council. Subsequent assessment and inventories should evaluate the success</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management</p>

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<p><u>and failures of past actions taken to protect or enhance tree canopy and refine methodologies to improve implementation of the inventory and assessment processes and the urban tree program overall. The assessment will use the best available practices and can rely on LiDAR/Satellite imagery.</u></p>	
<p>Policy 9.A.6 <u>The county should seek grant funding to support elements of the urban forest program including but not limited to opportunities to fund improvements along forested corridors preserved before contemporary critical area standards were adopted in 2007, and to fund improvements in alignment with the goals of the Salmon Safe Puget Sound Pledge, the Orca Recovery Plan, the Puget Sound Partnership, and the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9, MPP-En-13, MPP-CC-4</p> <p>MPP-En-Action-1: Open Space Planning: PSRC will work with member jurisdictions, resource agencies, tribes, military installations, and service branches, and interest groups to implement conservation, restoration, stewardship, and other recommendations in the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan. PSRC will review and comment on alignment with the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan during the comprehensive plan certification process. On a periodic basis, evaluate and update the plan.</p> <p>MPP-En-Action-4: Local Open Space Planning: In the next periodic update to the comprehensive plan, counties, and cities will create goals and policies that address local open space conservation and access needs as identified in the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan, prioritizing areas with higher racial and social inequities and rural and resource land facing development pressure. Counties and cities should work together to develop a long-term funding strategy and action plan to accelerate open space protection and enhancement.</p> <p>CPP-Env-3: The County and cities shall work collaboratively to create goals and policies intended to implement and address the needs identified in the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan.</p>
<p>Objective 9.B <u>Apply regulatory and non-regulatory strategies to retain and restore urban forest areas.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9, MPP-CC-4</p>
<p>Policy 9.B.1 <u>Recognizing the contribution of healthy trees and understory to air and water quality, stormwater management, habitat and other ecosystem services, the county shall review codes and administrative rules to identify where protections for urban</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9, MPP-En-13, MPP-CC-4</p>

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<p><u>forests and tree canopy can be strengthened and require that new development follows appropriate tree management practices.</u></p>	
<p>Policy 9.B.2 <u>The county shall investigate the creation of incentives to protect urban forest areas that provide significant functions and values outside of areas that are already critical areas. When landmark trees, a stand or grove of trees, or additional canopy cover is retained beyond regulatory standards, consider incentives such as stormwater modeling credits, density/building height bonuses, adjusted building setbacks or parking requirements. Incentivize tree retention and planting as visual amenities, providers of environmental services, and drivers of economic development.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9, MPP-En-13, MPP-CC-4</p>
<p>Policy 9.B.3 <u>County departments shall address urban forests within their custodial property inventories. Management strategies for county-owned urban forests and other forested spaces may be addressed through levels of service standards for forested areas within urban parks, right of way planning, impact fees, and properties purchased, donated, and/or managed by the county for conservation or restoration</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-13</p>
<p>Policy 9.B.4 <u>The county shall develop community-wide education and stewardship programs to enhance the community’s awareness of the value of trees and the urban forest. Encourage engagement in the care and maintenance of trees and related resources by including actions and resources to educate and involve the public.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9</p>
<p>Policy 9.B.5 <u>The county shall examine options for establishing a fee-in-lieu program to balance urban forest goals with other county objectives including but not limited to, urban development needs and urban growth targets, habitat restoration and/or enhancement projects, level-of-service standards for county parks, right-of-way</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9, MPP-En-13, MPP-CC-4</p>

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<p><u>planting, and frontage improvements, and equitable access to urban forested open space.</u></p>	
<p>Objective 9.C <u>Apply best management practices to maintain urban forest health, optimize ecological functions, and provide public health benefits.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9, MPP-En-13, MPP-CC-4</p>
<p>Policy 9.C.1 <u>Departments with responsibility for the urban forest should share standardized maintenance practices to increase overall consistency in tree maintenance, resulting in better tree health and longevity.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9, MPP-CC-4</p>
<p>Policy 9.C.2 <u>The county shall control invasive species which are destructive to forest health and eradicate them where possible on publicly owned property.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-11, MPP-CC-4</p>
<p>Policy 9.C.3 <u>The county’s tree maintenance programs must include integrated pest management strategies to protect soil, water, and air quality, and minimize use of pesticides and herbicides.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9, MPP-En-13, MPP-CC-4</p>
<p>Policy 9.C.4 <u>The urban forest management plan shall address standards and practices for resolving potential land use incompatibility issues including, but not limited to maintaining view corridors, preserving solar access for solar panels and gardens, minimizing property line issues where canopy and roots extend onto adjacent properties, preventing interference with public and private utilities, removal of invasive plants and hazardous trees, minimizing risk of potential damage from windthrow, illegal dumping and garbage cleanup in forested areas, and public access.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-13, MPP-CC-4</p>

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<p>Policy 9.C.5 <u>The urban forest management plan shall address and assign maintenance responsibilities for urban forest areas and identify access for maintenance purposes.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-CC-4</p>
<p>Policy 9.C.6 <u>The county shall provide educational materials aimed towards a greater understanding by the public of its individual and combined impacts on natural systems, the ecological and economic value of urban forests, and urban forest management and maintenance best management practices for private property.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9</p>
<p>Objective 9.D <u>The county shall Provide urban forest resources, including financial, education, and access, equitably across the community.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9</p> <p>MPP-RC-2: Prioritize services and access to opportunity for people of color, people with low incomes, and historically underserved communities to ensure all people can attain the resources and opportunities to improve the quality of life and address past inequities.</p> <p>CPP-DP-38: The County and cities should reduce disparities in access to opportunity for all residents through inclusive community planning and making investments that meet the needs of current and future residents and businesses.</p>
<p>Policy 9.D.1 <u>The county shall allocate community and urban forest resources, including financial and programmatic, in a manner that recognizes geographic, racial, and social equity.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9</p>
<p>Policy 9.D.2 <u>The county shall work to create or preserve urban forest assets across unincorporated urban areas to help provide access to urban forest benefits equitably for all residents of a community.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9</p>
<p>Policy 9.D.3 <u>The county shall identify actions and areas for acquisition of urban forest assets in the county’s capital improvement</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9</p>

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<p><u>program that would contribute toward reducing unequal benefits provided by urban forests.</u></p>	
<p>Policy 9.D.4 <u>The urban forest management plan should incorporate the conservation needs assessment from the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan to identify gaps in equitable access to open space, as it applies to urban forests.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9</p>
<p>Objective 9.E <u>Consider management coordination of urban forests and trees along with planning for transportation and utilities. In the right of way (ROW) and tree maintenance in utility corridors.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management</p>
<p>Policy 9.E.1 <u>The county shall require that the location and type of trees planted in proximity to above ground and underground utilities shall be selected to avoid damage to the utility’s infrastructure and considers the long term health and maintenance needs of the forest and trees. The county shall review and update administrative rules regarding vegetation planting, maintenance and restoration standards in the right-of-way to reduce long-term maintenance needs of utilities and improve the health of trees planted or protected according to those rules.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-CC-4</p>
<p>Policy 9.E.2 <u>The county shall evaluate opportunities on transportation corridors to provide tree and shrub planting in conjunction with land development and county projects. County departments shall review codes, administrative design rules, and maintenance standards to find opportunities to enhance vegetation along transportation corridors. Priority shall be given to public safety.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9</p>
<p>Policy 9.E.3 <u>The county shall promote reliance on native trees and vegetation to help manage stormwater, wherever feasible.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9, MPP-En-13</p>

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<p>Objective 9.F <u>Coordinate urban forest management and tree canopy retention goals with other local and regional environmental programs and initiatives.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management</p>
<p>Policy 9.F.1 <u>The county’s urban forest management efforts should be coordinated with the urban forest preservation efforts of local cities, tribes, agencies, organizations, and adjacent counties.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management</p>
<p>Policy 9.F.2 <u>The county should develop a management approach for urban forests and trees that supports salmon recovery goals and Snohomish County’s commitment to Salmon Safe Puget Sound Pledge, the Orca Recovery Plan, the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan, and the Priority Habitats and Species data from the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Puget Sound Partnership’s Action Agenda.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-13</p>
<p>Policy 9.F.3 <u>The county shall provide outreach programming to the public designed to raise visibility of available opportunities for community partnerships with local organizations, schools, and agencies resulting in greater awareness and understanding of the importance of protecting and caring for urban forests and encourage participation in programs that support urban forest goals.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9</p>
<p>Policy 9.F.4 <u>The county shall invite the public to participate in the development of urban forest management program and preparation of the urban forest plan. The plan shall identify stewardship opportunities in support of long term public participation and sustainable tree practices and policies.</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9</p>
<p>Policy 9.F.5 <u>The county shall coordinate with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and others to identify and address in the urban forest management plan potential issues that could arise</u></p>	<p>RCW 76.15 – Urban Forest Management MPP-En-9</p>

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<u>where the urban forest edge abuts working resource lands or the wildland interface edge. Where edge issues may arise, deference must be given to best management practices on working resource lands and to public safety.</u>	

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